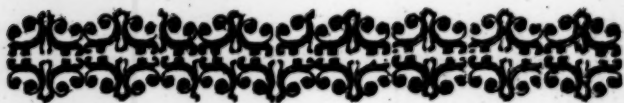


TICHBORN Mayor.

Tuesday, the 11th. of November, 1656.

IT is ordered that Mr. *Venning* be desired from this Court to Print his late Sermon at *Pauls*.

Sadler.



TICHBORN Mayor.

Tuesday, the 11th. of November, 1656.

IT is ordered that Mr. *Venning* be desired from this Court to Print his late Sermon at *Pauls*.

Sadler.

MERCIES MEMORIAL:

OR,

Israel's thankful Remembrance of
God in their high estate, for his mer-
cifull remembring of them in their
low estate.

In a Sermon before the Right Honourable
the LORD MAYOR, the Right Worshipful
the ALDERMEN, and the COMPANIES
of the City LONDON, on the 5th. of November,
1656.

BY
RALPH VENNING.

Psal. 107. 8.

*Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodnesse; and for
his wonderful works to the children of men.*

LONDON,
Printed for John Rothwell, at the Fountain in
Goldsmiths-row in Cheapside.
1657.

MEMORANDUM

WAS THE LATE LONDON
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To the Right Honourable
Sir ROBERT TICHBORN
LORD MAYOR,

And the Right Worshipful
The ALDERMEN of the
City of LONDON.

Honourable and Honoured,



When I had received your Order for the Printing of this Sermon, I procured the best Copy I could, by which and the best memory I had of what I delivered, I have endeavoured to present it to your view; not without a little addition to some heads, which then I could not enlarge.

The rest of this addresse My Lord and Gentlemen, is not to complement and flatter you, but earnestly yet humbly to beseech you that you would (as Mordecai said to Hester) seriously and studiously consider; wherefore God hath brought you to this high estate, bear the place and (as the Prophet said of the rod) him that hath appointed

The Epistle

appointed it; Be pleased to Know and account that the doing your duty in your Place is the greatest honour of your place; whereas else it will be said that your Places honoured you, but you honoured not your Places.

Indeed 'tis the fashion of this World to seek great things for themselves, 'tis their devotion to sacrifice to their own ~~will~~, ~~is their ambition~~ to Lord it; they are passionately enamoured with the Delights and Delicacies of this life, which the heavenly St. John calls the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life; 'Tis all but lust, and the lust of the World, which World and which lust (saith he) passeth away: and which the Wise Solomon on sad and dear bought experience, calls vanity of vanities and vexation of spirit; yet after all these things do the Gentiles seek. But saith our blessed Lord and Saviour, it shall not be so with you, you are not your own, and therefore shall not seek your own, but are Christ's; and therefore seek the things of Christ, and endeavour to doe great things for God: Oh be not led away with the error and example of this World's admirers, to be fond of a poor and miserable because but temporary and perishing greatness. 'Tis a meer Pageant which is but a shew, and a shew that passeth away, as you know.

'Twas David's praise, and 'twill be yours if you tread in his steps, that he served not onely his generation, but the will of God in his generation, or his generation according to the will of God; Consider then what is the good and perfect and acceptable will of God, that you may be in readinesse to every good word

Dedication.

word and work, walking worthy of God to all well
pleasing.

Indeed (so speak as the thing is) you know how to
please, none to serve but God; you may not be the servants
of Men, and you must not be the servants of Sin; onely
sanctifie the Lord in your hearts, love him, serve him, let
him be your fear, and your dread; Fear to displease the
God you love, and love to please the God you fear;
lest you be found (which God forbid) among them that
had a name to live, but were dead; that had been pro-
fessors of Christ, but practitioners for selfe, and for the
World.

If the World frown and accuse you for non-confor-
mity, let it be to you a small thing (as it was to the good
as well as great Apostle) to be judged by mans day,
seeing your judgement is with the Lord; and give me
leave to tell you, let the World look as big and as fowre as
it can, you may safely and honourably avow it; that the
best way to please all, or displease any with least dan-
ger, is to please him who is all in all.

Remember withall that you must one day give an ac-
count of your Stewardship, to the great God of Heaven
and Earth, who will not judge according to appearance,
but he (searching hearts) will judge righteous judge-
ment, and give to every man according to his works: Now
I wish with my soul, that you may doe so well in this
your day, as that in that great and terrible day of the
Lord, you may hear the joyful sound, of Well done
good and faithful servants, enter ye into your mas-
ters joy.

I shall add no more but my desire to God for a blessing

The Epistle, &c.

*on this Sermon, that as your ears by what you heard,
so your eyes by what you see, may affect your heart to
live, for that is, to give thanks to God in your high
estate, who remembered us in our low estate.*

So prayer,

Right Honourable

And

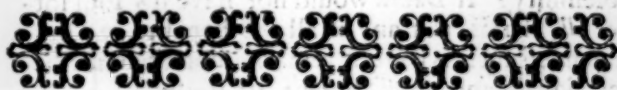
Right Worshipful,

Decemb.

1656.

*Your humble Servant in the
service of Christ Jesus*

RALPH VENNING.



MERCIES MEMORIAL:

OR,

Israels thankfull remembrance of God in
their high estate; for his mercifull remembering
of them in their low estate;

From

PSAL. 136. 23.

*Who remembred us in our low estate; for his
mercy endureth for ever.*



Or the compleating of the sense, you
are to reade it thus, O give thanks unto
the Lord, who remembred us in our low
estate; for his mercy endureth for ever.

I presume it cannot (I am sure it
ought not to) be said of us this day, as it was said
of them in *Acts* 19. ver. 32. Some therefore cried one
thing, and some another; for the assembly was confused,
and the more part knew not wherefore they were come to-
gether. Who is such a stranger in this our English *Is-
rael*, as not to have heard of the Gunpowder Treason?
is there either Popish enemy, or Protestant friend,
that knows not what a just Right and lawfull Title
the fifth of November hath to this Observation and

B

Solem-

Solemnity? If *David* would not have his soul forget *all*, that is, not any of all the benefits of God: much less such as have a remark upon them for being signall and transcendent. If Personall mercies deserve their memoriall, surely Nationall mercies deserve a memorable celebration.

Of this then I may say as in the twelfth of *Exod.* ver. 42. only turning night into day, and *Israel* into *England*, *It is a day much to be observed unto the Lord, for bringing them out of the Land of Egypt; this is that day of the Lord to be observed of all the children of England in their generations.* But not to Preface away any more of your time in a case so cleer as this is; not only known by us, but acknowledged by our enemies; we need not ask, *Is there any cause?* for they themselves have confest the cause.

This Psalm may be intituled as the 38 Psalm is, *A Psalm to call to remembrance*, only with this difference, that that Psalm calls misery, and this Psalm calls mercy to remembrance; which is so much the sweeter to be remembered.

It was penned on an occasion, and to an end like this, for which we are met this day to make a thankful acknowledgment, and a pious commemoration of the mercies of God to the States of the Commonwealth, the Vessel in which all our Interests were imbarqued. Let us then give thanks to the Lord, who remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever.

In the words (which may have for Title, *Mercies Memoriall*) you have these three generall parts:

First, Here is their remembering, and an acknowledgment

ledgment of Gods remembering them, *who remembered us in our low estate.* Wherein you may observe,

1. The Mercy it self in this word, *remembered.*
2. The Author of this mercy, in this word, *who*; who is this *who*? *the Lord* in the first Verse, *the God of Gods* in the second Verse, *the Lord of Lords* in the third Verse, *who* remembered us.
3. You have the Objects of this Act, or the Receivers of this mercy, in this word *us*; who remembered *us*.

4. You have the Season of this mercy, or the time when this God thus remembered this People; and that was, *in their low estate*; who remembered us *in our low estate.*

Secondly, You have an account here of the true Reason and Originall of this Mercy; and that is in these words, *for his mercy endureth for ever.* There is no reason to be given for Grace, but Grace; there is no reason to be given for Mercy, but Mercy; who remembered us, *for his mercy endureth for ever.*

Thirdly, You have a Duty inferred hereupon; and that is that which (*as I told you before*) is to run in common to every Verse, *O give thanks unto the Lord*, who remembered us in our low estate; for his mercy endureth for ever.

From this Analysis, or Resolution of the words, you have these four observable Propositions:

1. That Gods Israel, Gods own People, a People that are nearest and dearest to him, may yet be in a low estate; *us in our low estate.*

2. God remembers his People in their low estate (*quoties premebamur*, as one words it) as often as ever

we were low; God remembered us when ever our estate was low, or whatever our low estate was; God remembered us in our low estate; who *remembered us in our low estate.*

3. The Reason why God remembers his People in their low estate, is, because his mercy endureth for ever; he remembered us in our low estate, *for his mercy endureth for ever.*

4. Gods remembering his People in their low estate, lays an obligation upon them to give thanks to the Lord; *O give thanks unto the Lord*, who remembered us in our low estate; for his mercy endureth for ever.

The two first of these will take up the Doctrinall Discourse; the third of these will be the Demonstration of the Discourse; and the last, the Application of the whole. Then we shall say, *O give thanks unto the Lord*, when we have proved that *he remembereth us in our low estate*, and that because *his mercy endureth for ever.*

This then is the Method which I shall observe:

First, I shall open and explain the terms, that we may understand this Truth.

Secondly, Prove the truth of the Proposition, that we may believe it. And

Thirdly, Apply it, that we may improve it, *which is the mercy of all our mercies.*

For the explanation of the Contents here, I shall propound only two Questions.

1. When may a People be said to be *in a low estate*?

2. What it is for God to *remember his People in their low estate*?

First,

First, When may a People be said to be in a low estate? Some reade it, *when we were dejected and cast down*; as if he had said, when we were faithles through fear; when we were so overwhelmed, that we knew not what to do; when we were hopeless, and least of all lookt for help, then God remembred us, and the things we feared came not upon us; God being mercifull to us above all that we could ask or think. But I did not (*nor shall*) handle it in this sense; *only let me say*, that Gods People are sometimes in this low estate, *low in faith, low in hope*, and yet God remembers them; so great is his goodness; and our thankfulness should be the more.

But a People may be said to be in a low estate, either 1. Actually; or 2. Potentially. First, *Actually*; and that more generally when they are in affliction and misery; when they taste the wormwood and the gall, as *Jeremiah* pathetically expresses it in his *Lamentations*; when they are in want, when they are low in estate; or when, as 'tis said in *Psal. 107. 39.* they are diminished and (from an high degree, from a wealthy estate, they are) *brought low*, through oppression, affliction and sorrow; when a People are under *all*, or *either of these*, oppression, affliction, or sorrow, they may be said to be in a low estate.

But more especially they are said to be low (*with reference to the Text*) when they are in the Enemies hand; *that is*, when they are in the Enemies power; as we may gather from the following Verse, *who hath redeemed us from our enemies.*

And you shall finde that this is reckoned to be their low estate in *2 Chron. 28. 18. 19. The Philistines*

also had invaded the cities of the low countrey, and of the south of Judah, and had taken Bethshemesh, and Ajalon, and Gederoth, and Shochu, with the villages thereof, and Timnah with the villages thereof, Gimzo also with the villages thereof, and they dwelt there; for the Lord brought Judah low, because of Abaz King of Israel. The Lord brought Judah low, and this was the lowness of their condition, that they were in the Enemies hands; their Enemies had dominion over them, and took possession of their Possessions. Thus you have it also in *Psal. 79. 7, 8.* For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling places; O remember not against us former iniquities; let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us, for we are brought very low. This was the lowness of their condition, that their Enemies had devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling places. But this was not our case through mercy, this was not our low estate. Yet again therefore

Secondly, A People are said to be low *potentially*, when they are in the way to be low; when they are designed and destinated to a low condition, by the craft and cunning malice of wicked men, who (*as unto them*) dig deep to hide their counsell from the Lord, and whose works are in the dark, *saying*, who sees us? and who knows us? who sit in the lurking places, secretly to murder the innocent; whose eyes are privily set against the poor, who lie in wait secretly as a Lion in his den to catch the poor; as if there were no help in their God, and he were not able to deliver them out of their hand; *thus they plot and design a people to an estate as low as death;* and upon this

this account we are said to be slain, though but appointed to be slain. In *Rom. 8. 36.* as it is written, *for thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.* In this we are low, when we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter; so that though a People are not *actually* in their Enemies power, though they are not *actually* in misery, affliction, and sorrow, yet they are said to be low when they might have been so, had not God prevented; to be killed all the day long, when they are appointed to it; *for thy sake are we killed all the day long, being appointed as sheep for the slaughter;* and this was our low estate out of which God delivered us, *as we remember this day,* we were accounted as sheep for the slaughter, we were killed all the day long in our Enemies account. And this shall briefly suffice for the state wherein they were, and we were; he remembered us *in our low estate.*

Secondly, What is implied in this, that God remembered them in their low estate; the word is a pregnant word, it bears twins thrice told, its big, of a sixth fold sense, as so many degrees of mercy in it.

1. *To remember,* signifies to think upon, *in opposition* to forgetfulness; thus the word is rendred, *Gen. 40. 14.* saith Joseph to the Butler, *think on me;* in the Hebrew 'tis *remember me;* yet *ver. 23.* the Butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him; *that is,* did not think on him. So it is used also in *Gen. 8. 1.* And God remembered Noah, and every living thing. It might have been thought, that when the Ark lay floating on the face of the waters, and ran a drift for

for an hundred and fifty days, that God had forgotten Noah and every living thing : but saith the Text, God *remembred* Noah, God did not forget Noah, God *thought on* Noah ; and in this sense God *remembred* us in our low estate, God had us in his thoughts, he had not forgot us, which is *no small mercy not to be forgotten of God* ; we may dwell in mans thoughts and not be the better for it, but we cannot be in Gods *remembring thoughts* but we shall be the better for it. Therefore

2. To remember (*as the second degree of the mercy*) signifies to take notice of a thing, in *opposition* to neglect ; so it is used in *Exod. 20. ver. 8. Remember* to keep holy the Sabbath day, take notice, *that is*, neglect it not, *remember* to keep holy the Sabbath day ; so God *remembred* us in our low estate ; how ? why he did not barely think upon us, but he did observe and take notice of us, and considered what our case was. But

3. It signifies (*as the third degree of mercy*) to lay to heart, to pity and compassionate persons in such a case ; what am I the better for any bodies thinking of me, if he do not take notice of me, so as to pity me in my low estate ? so God doth, as in *Jer. 31. 20. Is Ephraim my dear son, is he a pleasant childe ? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still ; or, as the Hebrew reads it, remembring I will remember him ; therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord ; this earnest remembrance was the earnest of the mercy. But again,*

4. To remember, signifies yet more (*as the fourth degree*)

degree of mercy) to be well pleased with a person in such a case, to accept of a person in such a case; so the word is used in *Psal.* 20. 3. The Lord *remember* all thy Offerings, and accept thy burnt Sacrifice; remember, that is, accept; why now thus God remembered us in our low estate; we were acceptable to him, and well-pleasing in his eye at that time, when by our Enemies we were appointed as sheep for the slaughter; so you may see it in *Acts* 10. ver. 4. And when *Cornelius* looked on the Angel, he was afraid, and said, What is it Lord? and he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a *memoriall* before God; that is, they are as a sweet smelling savour, as a sacrifice well pleasing to God. Thus did the Lord *remember* us; that is, he accepted of us, he took pleasure in us, in our low estate. But again,

5. To *remember*, signifies (as the fifth degree of *mercy*) to hear, and to grant a request; so it is used *1 Sam.* 1. 19, 20. And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the Lord, and returned, and came to their house, to *Ramah*, and *Elkanah* knew *Hannah* his wife, and the Lord remembered her; wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about, after *Hannah* had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name *Samuel*, saying, Because I have asked him of the Lord, God remembered *Hannah*; and the next word is, he gave her what she asked. So here God remembered us; how? what only think of us, or take notice of us? or did he lay it to heart, and pity and compassionate us, and was well pleased with us? no, *not only so*; but God did

hear and grant the desires and prayers of his people; thus God remembered us. But again,

6. *To remember*, signifies (as the sixth degree of mercy) to help and succour, or to redeem and deliver from that which we were appointed to, *from the low estate*; and so it is in *Gal. 2.10*. Only they would that we should remember the poor, the same which I also was forward to do; remembring of the poor is not barely a thought, but a relieving thought; therefore saith he *in the following verse*, who hath redeemed us from our enemies; this was the remembrance of God, *redemption* from enemies. When Paul was, *if not forgotten, yet forsaken of all*, then God remembered him, and stood by him; so that though sentence of death were passed, yet God delivered from so great a death. Now then you see what it is for God to remember a people in their low estate; *it is to think upon them*, in opposition to forgetfulness; *it is to take notice of them*, in opposition to neglect; *it is to lay their case and estate to heart*, to pity and compassionatethem, and to be well pleased with them, to hear and to grant their requests, to help and succour, to redeem and deliver them from the hand of their Enemies.

But now for the proof of this point, that this is a truth, That God remembers, *and thus remembers* his people in their low estate; there are some truths so cleer, that the naming of them is sufficient evidence for them; as they say of some errors, they are so palpable and gross, that to repeat them, is to refute them: so some truths are so cleer, that but to name them, is to cleer them, *especially* when it is such a truth

truth as experience must speak to, as here it is; *who remembred us in our low estate.*

And indeed to which of the Saints shall we turn? who can say of all the Sons of *Jacob*, that God hath forgotten them? did not God *remember Joseph* in his low estate? did not God *remember Israel* in their low estate? and did not God *remember David* in his low estate? Nay, to speak of all at once, did not God *remember Christ* in his low estate? and this day speaks for us, that God *hath remembred us* in our low estate.

And indeed my beloved, we may take up that Song, and sing it, in the 124 Psalm, *If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side*, now may England say, *If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side when men rose up against us*, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us, then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our Soul, then the proud waters had gone over our soul; *Blessed be the Lord*, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth; our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken and we are escaped; *our help is in the Name of the Lord*, who made heaven and earth.

This may we say, thus may we sing, *Is it not so?* is there a contradiction to be made against this truth? Nay, *my beloved*, the case was this, that if God had not been on our side, we had been swallowed up quick; and our not being so, shews God on our side, that God *remembred us* in our low estate.

I shall therefore proceed to the third thing, which

is, *the reason why* God remembreth his people in their low estate; *that is*, as in the Text, *for his mercy endures for ever*; he harps only on this string, he reckons up a long Catalogue of many mercies; and the reason of all these is mercy, *only mercy*; the reason of one is the reason of all, *as I told you before*, there is no reason for mercy, but mercy; no reason for grace, but grace; who is gracious; *why?* because he will, and to whom he will be gracious; so that you see that *mercy in God, is all the reason of mercy from God to man in his low estate*; it is *not* mans merit, *but* Gods mercy; it is *not* mans due, *but* Gods gift; it is *not* mans demand (nor was it in this case mans desire) *but* Gods grant; who many times answers before they call, and when they are yet speaking, he is hearing; it was *not* mans measure, but Gods allowance; it was *not* after the manner of men, *who use to go over where the stile is low*; this was *not* because man could make God a requitall, *but* because God would act like himself; it was *not* Gods profit, *but* mans necessity; it was *not* that God needed man, *but* man needed God; therefore *grace still is as free after it is received, as it was before it was given*; it was not deserved, and cannot be requited; God therefore gave, as looking for nothing again; *that is*, nothing that can require it; and you shall have for this a double witness, *God speaks it, and Saints speak it*, that God shews not mercy to man because man pleaseth him, but because mercy pleaseth him; indeed one end that God hath in shewing mercy, is, that man should please him; but that is not the main motive; for in truth to put mans will before

before Gods, is *such an hysteron proteron*, that (if I may use so homely an expression in so solemn a case) I say it is *to put the cart before the horse*. You shall finde God speaking, *Ezek. 36. 21, 22, 23.* But I had pity for *my holy Name*, which the house of *Israel* had profaned among the Heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the House of *Israel*, Thus saith the Lord God, *I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy names sake*, which ye have profaned among the Heathen, whither ye went; And I will sanctifie *my great Name*, which was profaned among the Heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them, and the Heathen shall know that I am the Lord, *saith the Lord God*, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. *It is a folsom Doctrine to flesh and blood, to think it must be beholding for all to grace*; shame and confusion belongs to man, mercy belongs to God; man makes work for shame and for sorrow; God works mercy as never obliged to it, but for his holy Names sake; and *Jeremiah in his Lamentations* makes this acknowledgement, and so confirms the witness of God in *Lam. 3. 21, 22.* This I recall to my minde, therefore have I hope; *it is of the Lords mercies* that we are not consumed, *because his compassions fail not.* If it be of the *Lords mercies* that we are not consumed and brought to utter desolation, *surely then* that we are remembered and delivered *is for no other reason*, but because his compassions fail not, but his mercy endureth for ever. Thus I have given you the *Doctrinall* part, with what brevity I could; I come now to the Application.

First then, it will afford us an *information*.

Secondly, *Some exhortations*.

The Information is this :

Doth God remember his people in their low estate? O happy (*how happy*) are they then that are the People of this God! *that have the Lord for their God*; it is not every man in generall that is thus remembred: no, *God hath his peculiars, for whom he hath his peculiar favours*; indeed his mercy is over all his works; he is good, and doth good to all, but *there is a specialty to the household of faith*; and God that doth command us to do good to all, but *especially to the household of faith, he doth but command us that which he patterns us*; therefore David makes his Prayer in *Psal. 105. 4, 5*. Remember me, O Lord, with *the favour that thou bearest unto thy people*; O visit me with thy salvation, that I may see *the good of thy chosen*, that I may rejoyce in *the gladness of thy Nation*, that I may glory with *thine inheritance*; O Lord favour me with the favours, &c. *The good of Gods chosen is a choice good*; and so he goes on, O remember me with the favours wherewith thou remembrest *thy people*. It is an expression in *Psal. 146. 5*. Happy is he that hath *the God of Jacob* for his help, whose hope is in the Lord *his God*. Why the God of Jacob? because God, though he be every bodies God, and God of the whole Earth, yet *he is Jacobs God in a more peculiar manner*; he is the God of all the World, by the opening of his hands, and filling them with such blessings; and *he is Jacobs God by opening his heart*, and filling him with those blessings; and so far as heart is above hand, so far are heart-mercies

mercies above hand-mercies, and so far are Gods people more happy then other people. David hath a saying in *Psal. 144. ver. ult.* Happy are the people that are in such a case; yea, *happy is that people whose God is the Lord.* Happy is that people whose God is the Lord; there were persons named before, *who were so vain as to say,* happy were the people that were in such a case, *viz.* that had their Barns full, and their Tables full, and their Purfes full in the World: I but faith David, *Happy is the people that hath the Lord for their God;* if a man had all the World, and had not the Lord for his God, he is less happy then he that hath the Lord for his God, and not at all of the World. God alwaies remembers his, *either to deliver them from evil, or to turn their evil into good;* either to supply them with the things they want, or to let them know that it is good for them that they should want it. *My beloved,* methinks this should engage all of you to look after having God for your God; it is a commendation that passeth among you, when you see young men entring on the stage of the World, you say he is like to do well, *for he minds the main chance,* he takes care to look after his Shop and his Trade, and you say such a one is like to thrive. If ever you mean to thrive, to go from a low to an high estate, from a poor to a rich estate, from a miserable to an happy condition, look after this, *the having God for your God;* what is God to you if he be not your God? *Tolle meum & tolle Deum,* as he said; 'tis cold comfort to me while I live, and when I die, that there is a God, but (alas!) not my God. You see then that nothing concerns you so much

much as this; *may indeed*, to speak as properly as positively, nothing but this, *this is your only interest, and this only*. O what an ingagement should this be to every person living, to go to the Father by the Son? *for this is the main chance, the one thing necessary*, that ye might have a portion with the Son and the Father. *Beloved*, who would not live in Gods thoughts? who would not have God to take notice of them? who would not have God to lay their cause to heart, to pity and compassionate them? who would not have God to be well pleased with them? who would not have God to hear and grant their requests? who would not have God to help and succour them, to redeem and deliver them? *O who would not be the Lords people?* it is the summe of all the Covenant, I will make with them a new Covenant, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people*; O what a sad case are they in, that come not under the new Covenant! whatever good we have from communion, it flows from union; *all that comes savingly to us, it all comes from this, that God is our God*; therefore I beseech you to minde this more, look after an interest in God. O what will you do in your low estate else? in your evil daies else? when death and sickness shall bring you low, what will you do if God be not your God? if you have not a God to think of you, a God to take notice of you, a God to lay to heart, and to pity and compassionate you, and a God to grant your requests, and to deliver and redeem you, what will you do? O therefore I beseech you to look after this, to have God for your God; for they, *they only* are happy, and they are
thrice

thrice happy, yea *terq; quaterq; beati*, altogether and alwaies, in all estates happy, who have the Lord for their God: But for the exhortations, and that thus.

First, Doth God remember his people in their low estate? let us *trust God then, when we meet with future straits*; our God is a God that we shall need for ever; and why do not we record the years of the right-hand of the most high? and the wonderful things that God hath wrought for us, in ages past? that the God that hath been our help, may be our hope. Are any of you in a low condition? do any of you that are the Lords people fear, you may be brought low, in any condition whatsoever? *O remember this*, God remembers his People in their low estate, and *heretofore-mercies are grounds to look for hereafter-mercies*; mercies past are grounds to look for mercies to come, as the Apostle saith, *2 Cor. 1. 10.* who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, *in whom we trust*, that he will yet deliver us. *O my beloved*, read over your experiences, look over Gods dealings with you, and remember how God dealt with you in such and such and the other low estate; and then raise up your hopes, surely that God that did, the same God will remember me in my low estate. Why? *for his mercy endureth for ever.* Gods stock is not spent, his riches are unsearchable, there is no fathoming of his goodnesse. If David thought *the experience of others a good ground to build his hope and expectation upon*, as he pleads it, *Psal. 22. 4, 5.* Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted and thou didst deliver them, they cryed unto thee and were delivered, they trusted in thee and were not

confounded. *Much more his own experience, as he urgeth it, v. 9, 10, 11. thou art he that took me out of the womb, thou didst make me hope when I hung on my mothers breasts; I was cast upon thee from the womb, thou wert my God from my mothers belly; and he adds as if he had said, therefore, be not far from me now trouble (new trouble) is near: and this was so successful, that before the Psalm is ended he praiseth and calls on others to praise God; for saith he v. 24. God hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, but when he cried unto him he heard.*

Secondly, *Be like God;* doth God remember his people in their low estate? be like God then, and remember them that are in a low estate. Godliness what is it, but godlikeness; what is it to be godly, but to be like a God? *the life of godliness is called in the Scripture, the life of God, not in this respect only, that we have this life from God, or in this, that we live this life to God, but in this, that 'tis such a life as God lives. God lives the life of love, and God lives the life of mercy; and shall not we now be like God, to live a life of love, and a life of mercy, and good works? you may please to observe, that we cannot be in any thing said to be more like God, then in this of mercy; his Name when it is proclaimed, what is it, but the Lord gracious and merciful; now when are we like God? but when gracious, and merciful. When we are exhorted to be perfect, as our heavenly father is perfect, it is as another Evangelist hath it, to be merciful as our heavenly father is merciful. And so when Moses Exod. 33. 16. asked God to shew him his glory, saith God, I will cause*

cause all my *goodness*, that is my glory, that is my Name wherein I glory, to pass before thee.

You have been honourable, and why should I not hope you will be honourable still in good works? there are poor Children here before your eyes, that call upon you saying, *Remember us in our low estate*; there are many Hospitals that call for this, *remember us in our low estate*. And mark I beseech you what hath the name of pure Religion (and what hath the name, hath the nature of it) *Jam. 1. 27. Pure Religion*, and undefiled before God, and the Father, *is this*, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself *unspotted from the World*; this is the great spot of the World, that it is a cruel World, a World without bowels of pitie and compassion; a World that remembers not them that are in a low estate: *Mercy is the Churches Grace, and the Churches Glory*; and therefore I beseech you that you will remember as occasion offers, and when you are going out of these doors, forget not these words, *Remember the poor*. There is *nothing more unbecoming a people that have received mercy, then to be hard hearted*; not to have bowels of mercie, it is to put a blot on our own enjoyments, and to be wanting to that which we proclaim with joy and triumph this day. Oh love and pitie them that are in a low estate, remembering that you *your selves were sometimes low*, such were some of you. *Thou shalt saith God, Deut. 10. 19. Love the stranger, for you were strangers in the house of Egypt, and ye know the heart of a stranger, Exod. 23. 9.* You have had experience what a sad and disconsolate heart attends a low estate; let therefore the

brother of a low degree rejoyce that he is exalted, *Jam. 1. 9. yet so as to condescend to men of low estate, Rom. 12. 16. we seldome forget God or man in our high estate, but it may be said, as Exek. 16. 22. in all thine abominations thou hast not remembred the daies of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, in a low estate. It was the brand that Gallio lay under when the Saints were persecuted, that he cared not for these things. O it is a sad brand a very black character when it may be said of men that they do not care for these things. But again,*

Thirdly, Doth God remember his people in their low estate? O then let his People remember him in their high estate; he hath set you on high, O now remember him in your high estate: *it is but equal, that if God remember us when we are low, that we should remember God when we are high; To sin against the deliverances of God, and a God of deliverance too, is double iniquity; and yet it is mans great vanity and unhappiness, that he is seldome more apt to forget God at any time then when he hath most cause to remember him; when he hath mercy before his eye, yet then to forget a God; see this, Deut. 32. 15. of the rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. This was the sin of Ismael, he grew fat, how? why God fed him not with course fare, not with brown bread and water, but with dainties, he fed him with Butter of Kine, and Milk of Sheep, with fat of Lambs and Rams of the breed of Basban, with Goats, and with the fat of the Kidneys of Wheat, and for his drink he had the pure blood of the grape; and what then? why then he kicked*

kicked, and forsook the God that made him: God fed him, and then he forsook him. *O strange*! One would think that then he should have remembered him; but he then forsook God, & lightly esteemed the rock of his Salvation; and so you shall see *Hos. 13. 6.* It is there laid to the charge of Ephraim, *saiſt he;* they were filled, and as they were filled, their hearts were exalted; therefore, they have forgotten me; alas! therefore they forgot; what because God filled them? no, but yet then they were exalted, and therefore they forgot God who filled their hand with good and their bellies with his hid treasure. My beloved you see, *Times of enjoyment, though most desirable to us; are most dangerous to us; times of fulness, though most pleasing to us, are too too often made by us most displeasing to God;* that that should be the day of all daies, is strange; therefore, we have an exhortation given us, *Deut. 6. 10, 11, 12.* And it shall be when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the Land, which he ſware unto thy fathers, to Abraham; to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly Cities, which thou buildedst not, and houses full of all things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards, and Olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten, and be full, then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the Land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; there is not such another time of danger as the full time. Hence it was that holy Job was jealous of his children lest they were evil in a good day, lest at the time of feasting they should curse God. Man seldom turns his back more upon God then when he hath the greatest

obligations even before his eyes to keep him close to God; O therefore remember this that *mercies are not given onely for us to use to our comfort, but they are given for us to improve for Gods glory.* The Greeks have two expressions to set out riches by, the one *ἀρτία*, things had, or things in possession, the other *χρήματα*, things used; or things improved: now *χρήματα* they account the best, which is things used, *it is the improvement of mercy, that makes mercy a mercy indeed.* Hath God delivered us out of the hands of our enemies, that we should commit abomination? no, but that we should serve him with holinesse all the daies of our lives; *if not*, what can we expect, but that he should take away our mercies from us, and remember us no more. O therefore take heed that you do not (while you are eating, and drinking in remembrance of God) that you do not forget God. It is but too common, that eating and drinking takes away mens stomachs as to spiritual things. Tis very sad that mercies which are given us to indear God to us, *that we might love him the more, and serve him the better*, should be so abused by us as to love him the less and serve him the worse; that we should take the corn and the wine and the oyle, the silver and gold which God gives us, and prepare them for *Asal*, as they did *Hos.* 2. 8. and they *Ezek.* 16, 17--21. But now what will you have us to doe? you will say. Why

First, Take notice not onely of the mercies of God, but of God in the mercies; not only of the deliverance, but of God in the deliverance; for a deliverance is nothing so sweet as when the soul talks God in it; *mer-*

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cies are never so savory as when they savour of a Saviour; study then not only the mercy, but the God of mercy. This did Jacob when his brother Esau asked him Whose are all these? why saith he, the Children that the Lord hath graciously given thy servant, Gen. 33. 5. mark it, not only children, or children which God hath given, but children which God hath graciously given. And so Samuel you find him, 1 Sam. 7. 13. not only taking notice of the mercy, but of God in the mercy, hitherto the Lord hath helped; to have the help without God, is to have help without a blessing; and they that do not see God in it, they have but half-mercy, they have but the body of mercy; to taste God in it, and to enjoy God in it, that is the mercy of the mercy. So that in Num. 23. v. 23. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel; according to this time, it shall be said of Jacob, and of Israel, what hath God wrought? Jacob and Israel shall not say, loe what is wrought, but what hath God wrought; tis the Lords doing and therefore marvellous in our eyes: we shall not look upon mercy as marvellous sweet and precious, unless we see it is the Lords doing. God remembered us saith David. But again,

Secondly, Do not onely take notice of God in mercy, but as David doth here, keep catalogues of the mercies of God; Gods mercies are not to be forgotten; you will remember the kindnesses of your friend, all his favours and tokens; you will keep your Books of account wherein all your debts shall be entered; that they may be remembered, and shall God be forgotten? Memory is a slippery thing, and many times lets

let us go quickly; therefore did God command Israel to write down their deliverances; *they had not only a table for Commandes; but a table for Salvations also;* for that that is written will abide, *littera scripta manet.* and records brings that to mind which else would not be thought upon by us, as *Mordecai* was remembered by *Ahasuerus*. God hath a Book of remembrance written for what you do, and will not you have a Book of remembrance written for what he doeth? God hath it upon record, you have not a good thought, but God writes it down; you shed not a tear, but God bottles it up; you make not a prayer, but God puts it in his Book of remembrance; now shall God do so for you (not that God hath a weak memory, but it is for your consolation) and will not you write down his mercies? You know you dare not trust your memories for your debtors, or your debts; O my beloved, will you commit every thing to Book but Gods dealings? you can by your Book tell how much such a one owes you, and that such a one is so much in your debt, such a time so much, and such a time so much; but can you doe so by Gods dealings to you, that such a time, such a deliverance, and such a time, such a remarkable mercy? Oh let a Book of remembrance be written. But again,

Thirdly; Lay to heart the mercy of God. If it be written in a book, and not in the heart, it will have but little impression; and therefore 'tis commanded in the Scripture; *Deut. 4. 9. Take heed to thy self and keep thy soul diligently, least thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen; and (mark this) least they depart from thine*

shine heart; as if he had said, let not thine heart forget; as if the best memorie lay in the heart; therefore saith he, let not thy heart forget; the sense of mercy is the best memory. I and beloved let me tell you this, *mercy then works sweetly, when it works inwardly; when it doth not onely affect the eye and the ear, but the heart.* Moreover, you will not be able to give glory to God, if you lay not mercies to heart, *Mal. 2. v. 2. If ye will not hear, and ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my Name, saith the Lord of Hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because you do not lay it to heart; all else will be nothing, if you do not lay it to heart; you cannot give glory to God.* But again,

Fourthly, *Give thanks unto the Lord,* who remembered us in our low estate, this the very Text calls upon us for; and let the redeemed of the Lord *say and do so,* whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy, *Psal. 107. 2.* You may please to observe that in Scripture God hath these three Titles, *the Hope of Israel, the Saviour of Israel, and the Glory of Israel:* pray who was your Hope? was not God? who was your Saviour? was not God? pray then who shall be your Glory? shall not God? If we have had our mercies from God, shall not God have our thanks? The streames in this World, the rivers of Water do all pay their tribute to the Fountain; *they come from the Sea, and thither they go again:* All the world teacheth us to be true tributaries to God; doth not all come from God? by the same reason all ought to go to him; for saith the Text, *of whom, and*

to whom are all things; *de facto*, all is of him, and *de jure*, all ought to be to him.

First then, Let me beseech you to give him the calves of your lips; let your glory awake, and give glory to God; the tongue of man is called his glory; my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth, saith David, *Psal. 17. 9.* And saith the Apostle *Acts 2. 26.* my heart is glad, and my tongue rejoiceth; that which David calls glory, Peter (*from the Septuagint.*) calls tongue. So in many places, the tongue of man is called his glory, and wherein? in nothing but in glorifying God; in any thing else, it is his shame, but in this that it speaks to the praise of God, 'tis the glory of man, if man at any time say to God, open my lips, my mouth shall shew forth thy praise; and this is required from us in *Heb. 13. 15.* By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his Name; God doth not think the fruits of our lips small things. Why hast thou a tongue, but to speak to the praise of God? why hast thou lips, but to give fruit to God? And then,

Secondly, Give thanks to God by the fruit of you lives; the calves of your lips if they go alone, are poor perishing calves; *thanks living is the best thanksgiving that can be*; therefore you shall find in *Heb. 13. 15, 16.* By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his Name; and is that all? is that enough? Oh no, But to doe good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased; as much as to say, the fruit of the lips, without the fruit
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of the hand, and of the life, it is nothing. Pray remember it this day, and for ever; *herein saith Christ is my father glorified, when you bring forth much fruit; a little fruit serves not to give glory to God; herein is my father glorified, when you bring forth much fruit; a little is as none, my father is glorified when you bring forth much.* And so Phil. 1. 11. *Be ye filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God; observe it, not onely righteousness, and fruit of righteousness; but fruits of righteousness, and filled with them too; so that you see it is not a little that will doe it.*

Pray remember this, that your good works may so shine before men, that you that doe them, may glorifie God also; *by your lips he hath but single, but by your works he hath double glory;* for you that doe them glorifie God, and they that see them done will glorifie God; O therefor give a glorious example. But let me add a few things more, I beseech you, that your obedience may be qualified towards God, as your mercy hath been qualified from God towards you; how that is, I will tell you presently; onely this of the present mercy.

It was a preventing mercy; *to be prevented with the blessing of good, is the greatest kind of mercy:* deliverance from evil, is good; but to be delivered so, as not to be in evil, is much more good. Who will not reckon it a greater mercy alwaies to be in health, then to be delivered from sickness? though both are mercies, in this mercy we know not a mysterie, in others we have; this is not like peace, the joyful daughter of a sorrowful mother; this is not like health after a Pe-

silence; but this prevents all these; so much the greater mercy: *it took away no good from us; it brought no evil upon us;* and how great was this mercy? If this mercy had not been, for ought that I know, many of us had not had a being; or else which is worse, a being not worth the having.

But now to the qualifications of your obedience. The first qualification of your mercy was this, it was *free mercy*, it came not upon constraint, it was not forc't, nor wrested out of the hands of God; freely you have received, freely give; God loves to give cheerfully, and the same God loves a cheerful giver.

Secondly, Your mercy was *according to your own heart*, every way grateful and acceptable to you: let your obedience be so to God, be like *David* men after Gods own heart.

Thirdly, It was *seasonable mercy*, it was in our low estate, it was when you knew not what to doe; for you knew not the danger you were in: So let your obedience be seasonable, then 'tis beautiful.

Fourthly, It was a *signal mercy*; *digitus Dei hic*, the finger of God was here, the enemy being judge; signal mercies call for signal obedience; therefore be you sure to doe some singular and signal things for God, to return to the Lord according to the benefits received. Oh say, What? *What answerable thing shall I return the Lord for all his benefits?* But again,

Fifthly, It is a *continued mercy*; we enjoy our mercies from that mercy to this day; it is not one mercy, and not more, but a chain of mercy; not the mercy of a day, or a year, but the mercy of Ages: *well then*, let us be continual in obedience, let us be Christians;

not

not for a day, or for a fit, but Christians throughout every day in the year; not onely Christians here at Church, but at home in the Closet, and in the shop. And then again Lastly,

Sixthly, We have superadded to this *multitudes of other mercies*, heap upon heap, *he loadeth us with his benefits every day*; yea many a time, many a time *we may now say*, hath he saved us, he is the God of all our Salvations and his mercy endureth for ever; Let us then multiply obedience, and be alwaies abounding in the work of the Lord; Shall mercies encrease, and obedience decrease? God forbid.

Take a few provoking considerations, and I have done. I might draw considerations from *the Author* of the mercy, *God*; a God that was offended by us, a God that needed us not, and a God that gaines nothing by us; and yet this God remembered us in our low estate; that should engage us. I might also draw obligations from *the Objects*, and that is *us* that were not only an undeserving, but an ill-deserving, and are not a suteable returning People. I might draw Arguments from *the mercy*, that God remembered us in all the senses spoken of before; and I might draw arguments from *the season*, in our low estate, and from *the excellency of the duty* of thanksgiving, 'tis a comely thing; it makes us like the Angels whose whole employment and liturgy is to give and live praise to God. And from *this also* I might enlarge the discoveries of the obligation, *that his mercy endureth for ever*. But onely take these four Arguments.

1. *It is dangerous sinning after mercy received*; and the greater the mercy, the more danger in the sinning; the greater the mercy hath been, the greater

the danger of sinning will be: God was angry with *Solomon* that he turned his heart from the Lord God of Israel; I but *what was it that heightened this?* why it was this, that God had appeared to him twice. So saith *Ezra*, shall we again sin after such a mercy as *this? such a deliverance as this?* What could we then expect but that God should be angry with us till he had consumed us, and there should be no remnant nor escaping? *Ezra. 9. 14.* O sin no more, least a worse thing come unto us, God knows how to fetch all his pennyworths out of us; he hath Plagues yet seven times more in store; if he give them vent, Woe to us. See *Judges 10. 11, 14.* And the Lord said unto the Children of Israel, *did not I deliver you* from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the Children of Ammon, and from the Philistins? *yet ye have forsaken me, and served other Gods; Wherefore I will deliver you no more:* go and cry unto the gods which you have chosen, let them save you in the time of your tribulation; O this, *this is a sad case,* I will deliver you no more. If we forsake God, and forget God after such remarkable Salvation, let me tell you that we incur this, that God should say, I will deliver you no more.

2. *Our Mercies*, unless we make this answerable return to God, our mercies are not compleat; our mercies are long a compleating: a mercy is never compleat to us till we have returned the glory of it to God; mercies are not perfect mercies, till praises are perfect praises: See that in the 40 Psalm and the beginning. Mark the steps of the mercy. (1) *He inclin'd,* (2) *He heard my cry.* (3) *He brought me up out of an horrible pit out of the miery clay.* (4) *Set my feet on a rock.*

(2) *He*

(5) *Establisht my going; and* 6. As the crown of all, *He put a new song into my mouth, Praise unto our God.* The mercy was not compleat, though he was set on a Rock, *one would think past danger;* no, that is not enough that he was set upon a Rock, or that he was brought up out of an horrible pit, and out of the Miery clay, and had his goings established; *but there is this to make it up compleat,* he hath put a new song into my mouth, even Praise to our God. *O my beloved,* may it not be feared that you and I have many imperfect mercies? Why? because our returns are so imperfect, we do not sing the new Song, with such life and vigour as we ought to doe. O let us then look about us; our mercies are not perfect or compleat till we make an answerable return to God for mercies received.

3. Remember this, *this is all you can do for God,* and this is less then God hath done for you: you are not less then the least of mercies only before you have them *as to matter of merit,* but lesse then the least of mercies after you have received them *in respect of returns;* you can never give God enough, your best is too bad; and your All is too little; when you have done all, you are unprofitable servants, because you have done but what was your duty to doe; for man is bound to serve God with the utmost of his Spul and strength; *his all is Gods due;* Man must therefore be an unprofitable servant; *but O then how unprofitable is man that doth not doe his duty at all!* O my beloved let us do all that we can; for when we have done all, it is no more but what we ought, we give God but his own: Yet again,

4. Remember this, if this be not done, *this day is*
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in vain, and this day is lost; shall we beloved reward evil to our own souls; and turn our holy daies and holy duties into iniquity, the day is lost, it is gone. Saith God concerning the Fast, *is this the fast* that I have chosen, for a man to hang down his head for a day? No, no, this is not it. So may God say, *is this the Feast* which I have chosen? What onely to make a pompous show, and have a Sermon to serve for State, is this it? Do you think *beloved*, that God cares for mans Complements? What is it to give God a parcel of good words, and a parcel of bad works? What is it in words to confesse him, and in works to deny him? What is this? Is this the way of Pra^{se}? No, it is Hypocrisie, and the way to undoe all that we doe. I will but borrow the expression of the Psalmist, and so conclude, Psal. 50. 16. But *unto the Wicked* saith God, *what hast thou to doe* to decare mine Ordinances, that thou shouldest take my Covenant in thy mouth? what Wicked? and yet declare my Statutes! What wicked? and take my Covenant! What hast thou to doe? ah what hast thou to doe? Consider this ye that forget God, lest he tear you in peeces, and there be none to deliver you.

But now if ye offer praise by a right ordered Con-
 versation, *What then?* why then saith God, Know assuredly, that *he who offereth praise honoureth me, and to him that ordereth his Conversation aright will I show the Salvation of God.* Oh then I beseech you in the bowels of Christ Jesus, as you tender the honour of God and your own Salvation, that you thus *give thanks to the Lord who remembred us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever.*

FINIS.

